Employment Classified:

A Study of Prospect Status, Readership & Interest

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EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFIED:

A STUDY OF PROSPECT STATUS, READERSHIP AND INTEREST

This is one of a series of marketing research reports prepared by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau, Inc., as a service to the newspaper business and its advertisers.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The findings of this national survey indicate that 35% to 40% of all adults in the United States "try to keep up with" information about the job market. This kind of interest encourages browsing in the employment classified section of the newspaper and is highest among people with college backgrounds, those who are currently employed and adults under 35 years of age. (Table 1)

- For those who want to keep up with salaries, job openings and other information on the employment market, classified advertising in the daily and Sunday newspaper is the number-one source. In fact, classified ads in the newspaper receive more than twice as many mentions (59%) as all other commercial media combined. The second most important source of information (mentioned by 35%) is friends, relatives and coworkers. (Table 2)

- About six out of ten American adults (59%) are currently employed. The level of employment is highest (at 75% to 80%) among people with college backgrounds. Employed adults represent only a third of those actively investigating the job market, but they account for three fourths (74%) of the secondary prospects who would take (or change) jobs "if the right one came along". (Table 3)

- In spite of the high level of continuing interest in job market information, only a small proportion of adults (7% at the time of this survey) is actively seeking employment at any given point in time. Secondary prospects account for an estimated 22% of all adults; this key group, mostly employed, contains many of the skilled and specialized workers sought by recruitment advertisers. Among adults under 25 years old, 17% are active prospects for jobs. (Table 4)

- On average, 18% of the daily newspaper audience and 24% of the Sunday audience read one or more categories of employment classified ads. Traditional job listings attract the highest level of readership (18%), but recruitment advertising (at 13%) and employment agency ads (at 8%) also draw readers. Readership is highest among readers who are under 30 years old and drops off sharply at age 65. (Table 5)

- At the national level, employment classified represents a massive resource for both employers and job seekers. Over a seven-day week, an estimated 29 million adults read employment classified ads; about 10 million become interested in one or more ads; and over 3 1/2 million decide to follow up one or more. (Table 6)

- Browsing in the employment classified can trigger interest and follow-up even among seconday prospects and those who have "absolutely no interest" in a job. In fact, this research shows that adults who don't define themselves as active job prospects nevertheless read employment classified ads and can become interested in the advertising and decide to follow it up. (Table 6)

- Apart from any specific personal interest in the job market, about seven out of ten adults express positive feelings toward classified advertising in the daily and Sunday newspaper. When asked to rate the medium on a five-point scale, 66% give classified advertising favorable marks for being helpful; 67%, for making it easy to find what you want; and 70% for being a good place to advertise. (Table 7).

- The somewhat lower positive rating (52%) for "being a good way to find a job" reflects the unique nature of employment and the fact that many adults have had little experience in the job market. For instance, some adults may find it difficult to rate classified advertising on this item because they have spent years or even their entire working career with a single employer. (Table 7)

Table 1

General Interest in Information About Job Market
(by demographics)

	Unweighted Base: = 100%	Percent Who "Try to Keep Up"
Total adults	1,174	37%
By sex:		
Men	504	40%
Women	670	35
By age:		
18-24 years	141	44%
25-29 years	137	58
30-34 years	146	50
35-44 years	215	37
45-54 years	154	47
55-64 years	157	23
65 years or older	215	17
By education:		
College graduate	199	46%
1-3 years college	241	43
High school graduate	420	37
Some high school or less	298	29
By occupation:		
Professional, manager	206	44%
Technical, clerical, sales	196	45
Other employed	246	50
Not employed	494	26
By newspaper edition:		
Weekday edition	439	38%
Sunday edition	174	33

Question: Apart from any immediate interest you might have in changing jobs or finding employment, do you generally try to keep up with what's going on in the job market, the salaries being offered for your kind of work, and so forth?

Table 2

Main Source of Information About Job Market

	Percent Mentioning[a]
Classified ads, daily or Sunday newspaper[b]	59%
Friends, relatives, coworkers	35
Magazines	10
Television, TV	9
Union, trade association, etc	6
Weekly newspaper, classifieds	4
Radio	3
All other mentions	13
Base: Those who like to "keep up" with job market = 100%	(435)

Question: What is your main source of information about what's going on in the job market? (IF NEWSPAPER MENTIONED) What part of the newspaper gives you the most information about what's going on in the job market?

a) Total exceeds 100% because of multiple mentions.

b) Responses to the initial question and the probe indicate that the specific source of information was classified advertising for 49%; the business pages, for 7%; and some other part of the daily or Sunday newspaper for 3%.

Table 3

Current Employment Status
(by demographics)

	Total Employed	Professional, Manager	Technical, Clerical, Sales
Total adults[a]	59%	19%	17%
By sex:			
Men	75%	24%	13%
Women	45	13	20
By age:			
18-24 years	65%	12%	29%
25-29 years	80	23	21
30-34 years	77	31	18
35-44 years	77	31	20
45-54 years	77	20	19
55-64 years	47	17	11
65 years or older	11	2	4
By education:			
College graduate	79%	53%	16%
1-3 years college	77	23	31
High school graduate	60	10	20
Some high school or less	33	3	5
By household income:			
$35,000 and over	79%	35%	17%
$25,000 - $34,999	81	28	23
$15,000 - $24,999	64	16	22
Under $15,000	32	3	10
By employment prospect status:			
Active prospect	33%	14%	8%
Secondary prospect	74	21	25
All other	57	18	15

a) Some rows do not total 100% because "no answers" have been omitted (2% of total responses). Occupational groups may not add to total employed for same reason.

Table 3 (continued)

Current Employment Status
(by demographics)

	Other Employed	Not Employed
Total adults[a]	22%	40%
By sex:		
Men	33%	25%
Women	11	54
By age:		
18-24 years	22%	34%
25-29 years	35	18
30-34 years	25	23
35-44 years	23	23
45-54 years	37	22
55-64 years	15	52
65 years or older	4	89
By education:		
College graduate	6%	21%
1-3 years college	22	23
High school graduate	28	39
Some high school or less	24	66
By household income:		
$35,000 and over	24%	21%
$25,000 - $34,999	29	18
$15,000 - $24,999	12	19
Under $15,000	18	67
By employment prospect status:		
Active prospect	11%	67%
Secondary prospect	26	24
All other	21	43

a) Some rows do not add to 100% because "no answers" have been omitted (2% of total responses). Occupational groups may not add to total employed for same reason.

Table 4

Employment Prospect Status
(by demographics)

	Active Prospect	Secondary Prospect	All Other
Total adults	7%	22%	71%
By sex:			
Men	5%	23%	72%
Women	8	21	71
By age:			
18-24 years	17%	42%	41%
25-29 years	11	37	52
30-34 years	10	24	66
35-44 years	3	25	72
45-54 years	6	19	76
55-64 years	2	11	87
65 years or older	-	3	97
By education:			
College graduate	7%	22%	71%
1-3 years college	3	26	71
High school graduate	9	24	67
Some high school or less	5	15	80
By occupation:			
Professional, manager	5%	24%	71%
Technical, clerical, sales	3	33	64
Other employed	3	26	71
Not employed	11	13	76

Base: Total respondents = 100%

(See Appendix Base Table 1 for bases.)

Question: Which statement best describes your own personal interest right now in finding a job?

I am actively looking for a (new) job.
I am not actively looking but would change jobs (take a job) if the right one came along.
I have absolutely not interest in changing jobs (taking a job).

Table 5

Readership of Employment Classified Advertising
Among Readers of Yesterday's Newspaper

	Net (Any Employment)	Career Opportunities[a]
Total adult readers	19%	13%
By sex:		
Men	17%	13%
Women	21	13
By age:		
18-24 years	34%	22%
25-29 years	40	17
30-34 years	21	13
35-44 years	12	10
45-54 years	24	14
55-64 years	16	16
65 years or older	7	6
By education:		
College graduate	22%	17%
1-3 years college	19	9
High school graduate	21	14
Some high school or less	15	11
By occupation:		
Professional, manager	17%	11%
Technical, clerical, sales	19	13
Other employed	26	18
Not employed	18	11
By newspaper edition read yesterday:		
Weekday edition	18%	12%
Sunday edition	24	17

Base: Qualified yesterday readers with classification in newspaper read = 100%

(See Appendix Base Table 2 for unweighted bases.)

a) Label designates recruitment ads in display format.

Table 5 (continued)

Readership of Employment Classified Advertising
Among Readers of Yesterday"s Newspaper

	Employment Agencies	Job Listings
Total adults	8%	18%
By sex:		
Men	7%	16%
Women	8	19
By age:		
18-24 years	10%	31%
25-29 years	11	38
30-34 years	10	17
35-44 years	5	11
45-54 years	13	23
55-64 years	8	15
65 years or older	4	6
By education:		
College graduate	6%	21%
1-3 years college	3	16
High school graduate	11	20
Some high school or less	7	13
By occupation:		
Professional, manager	5%	15%
Technical, clerical, sales	8	18
Other employed	14	24
Not employed	6	16
By newspaper edition read yesterday:		
Weekday edition	8%	17%
Sunday edition	9	21

Base: Qualified readers with classification in newspaper = 100%

(See Appendix Base Table 2 for unweighted bases.)

Table 6

Readership, Interest and Follow-up of Employment Classified
(Total U.S. adults, by prospect status)

	Total Adults (000s)	Active Prospects (000s)	Secondary Prospects (000s)	All Others (000s)
Projected totals	171,205*	11,300	36,800	123,105
Readership:				
Yesterday[a]	19,900	5,325	6,365	8,210
Past week[a]	8,800	1,375	4,275	3,150
Total for 7-day week	28,700	6,700	10,640	11,360
Interest:				
Yesterday	7,030	2,915	2,390	1,725
Past week	2,900	845	1,575	480
Total for 7-day week	9,930	3,760	3,965	2,205
Follow-up:				
Yesterday	2,535	1,515	750	270
Past week	1,095	555	325	215
Total for 7-day week	3,630	2,070	1,075	485

* Source for estimate of total adult population:
Simmons Market Research Bureau, 1986 Study of Media & Markets

Questions: Did you read or look at any of the ads for _____(career opportunities, etc.)? Did you see any ads for (TYPE) that you might be interested in? Did you follow up on any of the ads you saw for (TYPE)? (IF "NO") Do you intend to follow up on any of the ads you saw for (TYPE)?

a) Note that "yesterday" denotes only qualified yesterday readers. Some of these may also have read on other days during the past week, but they were not questioned about classified advertising readership on other days. In this table "past week" denotes "did not read (a newspaper in the interviewer's kit) yesterday, but read in the past week".

Table 7

General Attitudes Toward Classified Advertising
(by demographics)

	Percent with Positive Attitudes on:	
	Helpful	Easy to Find What You Want
Total adults	66%	67%
By sex:		
Men	63%	68%
Women	69	67
By age:		
18-24 years	62%	69%
25-29 years	62	56
30-34 years	71	67
35-44 years	66	74
45-54 years	73	75
55-64 years	68	66
65 years or older	64	64
By education:		
College graduate	60%	67%
1-3 years college	73	72
High school graduate	66	67
Some high school or less	68	67
By occupation:		
Professional, manager	61%	71%
Technical, clerical, sales	66	71
Other employed	69	68
Not employed	66	65
By newspaper edition read yesterday:		
Weekday edition	70%	74%
Sunday edition	73	77

Question: Using this scale from one to five, with five meaning "extremely good" and one meaning "extremely poor", how would you rate classified advertising in the newspaper on: making it easy to find what you want? being helpful? being a good place to advertise things you want to sell?

(Figures shown represent combined "4" and "5" ratings.)

Table 7 (continued)

General Attitudes Toward Classified Advertising
(by demographics)

	Percent with Positive Attitudes on:	
	A Good Place to Advertise	A Good Way to Look for a Job
Total adults	70%	52%
By sex:		
Men	69%	45%
Women	71	58
By age:		
18-24 years	74%	55%
25-29 years	72	51
30-34 years	72	59
35-44 years	71	48
45-54 years	72	55
55-64 years	68	53
65 years or older	67	48
By education:		
College graduate	67%	43%
1-3 years college	73	46
High school graduate	70	55
Some high school or less	73	58
By occupation:		
Professional, manager	69%	44%
Technical, clerical, sales	73	54
Other employed	75	56
Not employed	67	53
By newspaper edition read yesterday:		
Weekday edition	74%	56%
Sunday edition	73	52

Question: Using this scale from one to five, with five meaning "extremely good" and one meaning "extremely poor", how would you rate classified advertising in the newspaper on: being a good place to advertise things you want to sell? being a good way to look for a job?

(Figures shown represent combined "4" and "5" ratings.)

APPENDIX

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

This report, one of three on consumer usage of classified advertising in daily and Sunday newspapers, is based on the results of a national, in-home survey of 1,174 adults conducted by Response Analysis of Princeton in the spring of 1986.

Purpose

For each of the three major categories of classified advertising (automotive, employment and real estate) the research had similar goals: to estimate the size of the classified audience on a typical weekday or Sunday and over a seven-day week; to determine the percentage of adults who are likely to be active or secondary prospects at any given time; to relate prospect status to readership of the relevant classified category and intentions to follow up on the advertising; to check the extent of continuing interest in cars, jobs and housing among the adult population; and to investigate general attitudes toward the classified medium.

Method and Sample

The research utilizes personal, in-home interviewing in one hundred primary sampling units (PSUs) across the United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii). Response Analysis supervised sampling and stipulated the

procedures for selecting households and respondents. (Only one adult was interviewed in each household chosen.) Up to four calls, or three callbacks, were made in order to complete interviews with designated respondents.

In the screening phase of the interview, respondents were asked about their current level of interest in buying a car, finding employment, and buying or renting a house or apartment. Screening also included questions about daily and Sunday newspaper readership over the past seven days.

Respondents who reported reading yesterday's edition[1] of a daily or Sunday newspaper were shown specific classified headings in that edition and asked about their reading, interest and follow-up of ads under each heading.[2] Those who had not read yesterday's newspaper were shown a card listing the most common automotive, employment and real estate classifications and asked which of these they recalled reading the last time they had read a newspaper. The analysis of classified readership was limited to respondents reading a newspaper within the last seven days.

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1) Interviewing was conducted Monday through Saturday. In order to collect information on Sunday section and insert readership, about twice as many respondents were interviewed on Monday as on any other single day.

2) Yesterday's newspaper pages carried in the interviewer's kit included all newspapers with a circulation-to-household ratio of 10% or more in that locality. Respondents who had read one of the newspapers in the interviewer's kit were designated as "qualified" yesterday readers. Respondents who had read a yesterday edition not included in the interviewer's kit were treated as "past week" readers.

Field Experience

Interviews were completed with 1,174 respondents, resulting in a response rate of 65%, as follows:

Total Housing Units Assigned	1,932
Vacant, nonexistent	-135
Eligible units (= 100%)	1,797
Completed interviews	1,174
Not interviewed:	
Refusals	242
Other (Not at home, illness, etc.)	381
Total not interviewed	623

Verification

A systematic sample of approximately 15% of interviews was verified through brief telephone interviews. Verification was undertaken to determine whether the interview was actually completed with the designated respondent and to assure that it covered the appropriate subject matter. The verifications revealed no evidence of questionable work on the part of the interviewers.

Weighting

A two-stage weighting procedure was used. In the first stage each respondent was given a weight inversely proportional to his or her probability of household selection and inversely proportional to the response rate in the stratum to which his/her location was assigned. (For this survey a stratum was defined by Census region with these first-stage strata: 25 most populous MSAs, other MSAs, and non-MSA counties.)

In the second stage of balancing, sample proportions were weighted to bring them into line with 1984 Current Population Reports projections for race, Hispanic origin, age, sex, and education.

Sponsorship

Newspaper Advertising Bureau, Inc., developed the questionnaires, specified the research design, commissioned the field work and analyzed the data. This report was written by Charles Lehman of NAB's Research Department. Copies of the questionnaires and additional details on sampling and interviewing procedures are available on request.

Appendix Base Table 1

Unweighted Bases for Total Respondents, Yesterday Readers and Past Week Readers, by Demographics

	Total Respondents	Yesterday Readers*	Past Week Readers*
Total adults	1,174	613	281
By sex:			
Men	504	282	119
Women	670	331	162
By age:			
18-24 years	141	59	42
25-29 years	137	62	40
30-34 years	146	69	49
35-44 years	215	117	58
45-54 years	154	90	29
55-64 years	157	90	31
65 years or older	215	123	28
By education:			
College graduate	199	123	59
1-3 years college	241	138	70
High school graduate	420	228	92
Some high school or less	298	121	54
By occupation:			
Professional, manager	206	127	56
Technical, clerical, sales	196	110	53
Other employed	246	120	59
Not employed	494	241	107

* Bases shown for yesterday readers refer only to "qualified" readers who had read a newspaper included in the interviewer's kit. Other yesterday readers were treated as past week readers.

Appendix Base Table 2

Qualified Yesterday Readers with Employment Classification in Newspaper

	Net (Any Employment	Career Opportunities[a]
Total adult readers	593	503
By sex:		
Men	271	228
Women	322	275
By age:		
18-14 years	55	47
25-29 years	60	53
30-34 years	66	61
35-44 years	115	96
45-54 years	85	69
55-64 years	87	74
65 years or older	122	101
By education:		
College graduate	115	96
1-3 years college	133	108
High school graduate	222	194
Some high school or less	121	104
By occupation:		
Professional, manager	121	101
Technical, clerical, sales	107	90
Other employed	116	99
Not employed	235	201
By newspaper edition read yesterday:		
Weekday edition	419	334
Sunday edition	174	169

a) Label designates recruitment ads in display format.

Appendix Base Table 2 (continued)
Qualified Yesterday Readers with Employment Classification in Newspaper

	Employment Agencies	Job Listings
Total adult readers	498	593
By sex:		
Men	223	271
Women	275	322
By age:		
18-24 years	48	55
25-29 years	53	60
30-34 years	55	66
35-44 years	99	115
45-54 years	68	85
55-64 years	72	87
65 years or older	101	122
By education:		
College graduate	102	115
1-3 years college	104	133
High school graduate	185	222
Some high school or less	106	121
By occupation:		
Professional, manager	102	121
Technical, clerical, sales	89	107
Other employed	100	116
Not employed	195	235
By newspaper edition read yesterday:		
Weekday edition	341	419
Sunday edition	157	174